

"Kiddies" Matinees

Nancy Anne Neale

FROM the time I was nine until I was about eleven, the Saturday matinee at our neighborhood motion picture theater was the highlight of every week for me. The theater was always jammed with dozens of my contemporaries who had also come to see the special "kiddies" show, which always included at least one western. The western was definitely our favorite type of show, and each of us had his favorite cowboy star. We really kept the projectionist on his toes. Whenever the show was started the least bit late or was interrupted in the middle, we always indicated our disapproval by stamping our feet on the floor as hard as we could. All of us seemed to be of the opinion that yelling, screaming, cheering, and booing added to our enjoyment of the picture; and many felt that being dressed in western clothes helped even more. Yelling back and forth to all our friends and eating pop corn and candy made the afternoon complete.

It had been seven years since I had attended a "kiddies" matinee when, on my brother's sixth birthday last June, I took him and his friends to one. Two westerns were shown, but somehow they weren't nearly as wonderful as the ones we had watched. The dialogue was trite, the plot was not nearly as exciting, and the hero wasn't as handsome. Furthermore, I was distracted by hundreds of little demons who were milling up and down the aisles or squeezing in and out of our row the whole time. A whole posse of little cowboys was sitting in the row behind us and all through the picture they took turns poking cap pistols in my back, sticking candy in my hair, and putting their feet on the back of the seat in which I was sitting. The worst part, though, was the noise; it was absolute bedlam. The screaming and yelling were much louder than when I used to frequent the matinees, and the stamping of feet was unbearable.

There was no doubt about it; something had changed. Was it the show or could it possibly have been I?

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The Steel Tomb

David L. Hodge

IT was 3:30 a. m. on a Friday late in October when I was awakened by a companion. I arose quickly from my canvas bed and hurried out onto the deck of the huge troop ship. It was a cold, windy morning, and touching the steel ship was like touching an iceberg. We went down into the dining hall, where we had a breakfast